

Supernatural or Superficial Church

by Leonard Ravenhill

The church needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be restored and to be a supernatural force in the world.

Duration: 1:33:55

Scripture: Acts 3:1

Topics: "Supernatural", "Supernatural Church", "Authentic Faith"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill challenges the church to reflect on its current state, contrasting the supernatural power of the early church with the superficiality of modern congregations. He emphasizes the urgency of the church to prepare for the impending judgment and the need for genuine spiritual revival, rather than mere entertainment or superficial gatherings. Ravenhill calls for a return to the roots of apostolic faith, where the church was marked by miracles, prayer, and a deep relationship with God, rather than being bogged down by tradition and superficiality. He urges believers to seek the Holy Spirit's power and to live out their faith authentically, as the early church did, to impact the world around them.

Transcript

Things I say are very incisive, I know that. They're disturbing and I intend that they should be. And you'll know what I'm meaning when I say this, that I can't think of anything more stupid than Noah standing on his ark, on the deck, the day that the world was to be flooded, with a bunch of pretty girls with short skirts and a bunch of fellas that look like men, I'm not just sure, clapping their hands and singing something good is going to happen to you today.

It doesn't make much sense does it? And yet a famous program does this every week, says to a world that's one heartbeat from judgment, something good is going to happen to you. Now I know if you turned it round and said something bad is going to happen to you, you wouldn't get any support, but I didn't know we were here to get support anyhow. I'm saying that to say this, that the pressure is on and the Church of Jesus will have to have more than it has now, to combat what's coming in these last final hours before Jesus comes.

We're facing what the Bible calls again the battle of principalities and powers. I hope you'll come tonight, I hope you'll bring your teenagers and hear what this young, we're going to sing about two hymns, have Danny sing something and oh no not Danny, that would never do it. We're going to have Bill sing something and we're going to give this young man the platform about ten minutes to eight and tell him he can go for an hour and a quarter, an hour and a half.

I've not heard him speak, if you close your eyes you'll be sure it's Billy Graham, he talks exactly with the same accent. I have read his life in a small book that's published and it's a very, very disturbing, very challenging book. This young man was in Stephen Alford's church in New York.

Stephen has resigned there as you know perhaps and they begged him to stay on. When he came back from Israel the other day they asked him to stop in there. He also made I think ten, a number of tapes to be put over their TV ministry through New York which reaches approximately, at least it has a potential of reaching 10 million people.

Well so much so just to excite you, try and get you at least tonight to shake off dull sloth and maybe tearfully leave. I'm not so sure he's on now but what was the man used to be on Saturday night? Yes I thought you might want to leave Lawrence Welk for one night and sacrificial as it is and come and hear this amazing young man because he certainly has, he hasn't had a theological encounter with God. He isn't just a smart kid that's come up and knows a few proof texts.

He's been to hell and back and he can say with David he brought me out of a horrible pit. Many volumes have been written attempting to prove the inspiration of the Bible. Somebody one day faced one of the greatest men in evangelism the world has had.

He was comparatively ignorant, he wasn't even a good theologian, he did not have good English but he became famous as D.L. Moody. Somebody asked him one day, can you prove that the Bible is true? How can you prove the inspiration of the Bible? And just as quick as that he said because it inspires me. And I think that's as good an answer as any.

It's possible to believe the Bible is inspired without feeling any inspiration. There are two ways to know the Bible. One is by education that is you go to Bible school and then they'll doctrinate you and tell you that Romans is chapter 1 to 8, 9 to 11, 12 to 16.

But again I remind you that there's all the difference between knowing the Word of God and knowing the God of the Word. We're suffering from a ministry that knows the Word of God and does not in general practice know the God of the Word. And that's my conviction.

I've said it to thousands of ministers in the past two years. We have more knowledge of the Word of God than we have of the God of the Word. Let me read just a short scripture to you, Acts 3 from verse 1. Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour.

A certain man from his mother's womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called beautiful. To ask an alms of them who enter the temple. Seeing Peter and John go into the temple he asked alms.

And Peter fastening his eyes upon him said, look on us. Great when you can say that isn't it. Look on us we've got what you need.

A little bit later in the chapter when they wanted to put a crown on his head and worship him he said don't look on us. As though by our power or holiness we have made this man to walk. But in the moment of his need he said look on us.

And he gave heed to them expecting to receive something of them. And this is the text no evangelist ever preaches on. Silver and gold I have none.

But such as I have give I unto thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Rise up and walk.

And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. Leaping he stood up he walked and entered with them into the temple leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

Now a man doesn't need a degree, the BSc degree in engineering to know when a train has left the track. A little boy can tell you say there's the train it's rolled over off the track. And by the same token a man doesn't need a theological degree to know that the church of Jesus has left the track.

We are no longer the church that Jesus died for. The disparity between the church that was and the church that is, is as wide as the Grand Canyon. The gulf of the Grand Canyon.

I try to make everything or turn everything into something that preaches or teaches me something. And two years ago we stood on the southern lip of the Grand Canyon as I'm sure many of you have done. And I remember seeing that plaque there and it gave a detail of the Grand Canyon.

Maybe I don't know how many thousands of years it was old. And then I remember the brief distinct features of the canyon. It said the river in the distance that yellow river I think was seven miles away.

It's 350 feet wide, it's 35 feet deep, it flows at a certain speed. It looked just like a little piece of ribbon but it's a very formidable challenging river. Then if you're in the base of the canyon you look up the walls are a mile high.

Maybe the deepest hole in the earth. It gave some other dimensions about it. And as I looked at that river and I saw that canyon I said to myself, what chance would a little child have, say a two-year-old child, if it were lost in that canyon.

What chance would it have of getting out? It couldn't go forward there's a river but it could never get across. It couldn't climb, scale these mountains, it's blocked in every way. What chance did it have? Well I applied it this way.

This is the church, the early church. A group of unlettered, uneducated, unknown men. Not men of prestige.

And Jesus has filled them with the Holy Spirit. And they are walled into high heaven. On this side with the greatest military machine in the world, the Roman Empire.

On this side the greatest intellectual machine, the power of the Greeks. In front of them a flowing river of the Jewish monopoly of God as they thought. All the Old Testament prophets, they had everything.

And yet at this point they had nothing. How the, how is that infant church going to get out of this situation? But it didn't get out. I say if the Bible doesn't inspire us, well then that's the reason we're so flat.

Either as laymen or preachers. And every time I open the book, the Acts of the Apostles, I think of an Englishman. A stuffy Englishman, a very brilliant Englishman.

Could read the Bible in various languages. He'd read it in this sleepy Elizabethan English that can get pretty monotonous sometimes, true enough. And he turned around in his swivel chair one morning, rather bored.

And he thought, no I won't read it in this. I'll read it in the Greek. And so he reached for his Greek New Testament, he opened it, began to read the Acts of the Apostles.

And suddenly the thing exploded, it became alive to him. And he summarized this as he turned page after page. He quaddled first of all with the title of the book, the Acts of the Apostles.

No that's not a right title, this is some of the Acts of some of the Apostles. It's not a complete record of the early church. As he went through the book, he discovered that it is the book of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned 52 times in this book. And because the Holy Spirit is, as our brother said, the spirit of prayer, prayer is mentioned 40 times in this book. And suddenly he began to see the whole thing is vibrating with the miraculous.

As I've said so often, almost facetiously, but I never get weary of saying it. If it doesn't do you good, it'll do me good to repeat it. The church began in the upper room with a bunch of men agonizing.

She's ending in the supper room with a bunch of women organizing. The mark in the early church was that of the supernatural. And when the church is not supernatural, I don't care how high your steeple is, how brilliant your preacher is, how many buses you have or anything else.

If your church or mine does not have the imprint of the supernatural, then all it has is superficial. This man read the word and began to see the miraculous here, and the miraculous there, and signs and wonders. It's a bit disturbing when you think of it, that there, there was the high priest, there was the temple, there's all the outlet.

They had the law, they had the prophets, they had a monopoly on God they thought. And God died past the whole bunch of them. He didn't say Caiaphas, would you mind going in the upper room and tiring till the end Jude, with power from on high.

He didn't go to any of the other priests or dignitaries. He bypassed the whole bunch of them. They were fundamental, but they were bogged down with tradition.

And so he takes a bunch of unlearned and ignorant men. J.B. Phillips summarizes in a very beautiful way, and I don't think anybody has ever surpassed this. Summarizes the early church.

He says, this is the Church of Jesus Christ, before it became fat and short of breath, by prosperity. This is the Church of Jesus, before it became muscle-bound by over-organization. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, where they didn't gather a group of intellectuals to study psychosomatic medicine.

They just healed the sick. This is a group of people not meeting together to sign on the dotted line, I believe in your doctrine, in your church, can I come in. They didn't sign articles of faith, they acted in faith.

They didn't say prayers, they prayed in the Holy Ghost. One of the greatest privileges I've had, I think, is to pray with some of the most wonderful men of our generation. Not just spend hours, nights, whole nights in prayer, days in prayer, weeks in prayer.

And it's quite something to hear a man anointed with prayer, who can pray 45, 50, 60 minutes, 90 minutes. There's nothing stale about it. And he isn't doing it, he isn't praying sideways, he's locked up there with God.

He's, he's all unburdening his burden heart and spirit. And he prays a language which isn't known normally to men. Not that, he doesn't pray in tongues, I'm not thinking of that.

He prays with something near, not quite like the passion that Jesus prayed in Gethsemane. This to me is very challenging. Peter and John went up to the temple.

Why did they go? Nobody in the temple believed what they believed, and they didn't believe what the folk in the temple believed. But they went to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. They got into trouble, but you know a little later, they were back in the temple.

They still insisted they went in the temple, even though they threw them out. And as they went to the temple, here is the man crouched at the gate of the temple. Now in my judgment, he's a type of a crippled world in which we live.

You know ever since Adam committed that first sin, we've been living in an emergency state. Look the world had hardly got born before you have impressed upon you, which we'll mention again tomorrow night, the fact that the earth was filled with what? Corruption and violence. What's it filled with now? Corruption and violence.

I don't care what nation you go to, Russia holds it down. A statesman, if there are any, a politician, let's let's use that modified word. Came back to Washington not too long ago, he'd been to Russia and he said, I never saw a drunk man on the street, I never saw a drug addict.

If they have any, they suppress them, they keep them out, but everywhere. Somebody has said, not until films went into Japan, did they ever have any, any family trouble. They have little tight families.

I've been in Japan, they're very obedient to their parents, but now they've got family problems and student problems. Violence is everywhere in the world. Corruption, everything's corrupt, from Watergate down to the gutter.

When you think of a film such as Deep Throat, which is the filthiest thing ever produced, even in New York City, and then they haven't too much conscience, I think, but they threw it out. It's the filthiest thing. It's sex, orally, you know what that means.

And yet they're fighting like fury and they're going to produce more films like that. And if you think that God's gonna watch much longer while America breaks, or England breaks his laws a thousand times a day, blasphemes his son, we have more divorce than any nation in the world, we've more drug addicts, we've more drunks, we're more perverts, we've more homosexuals, we've more illegitimate children, what more do you want? You want to break some more records? God's patience runs out. As I said to a couple of thousand preachers at the Southern Baptist Convention, if I gave you a piece of paper and a pencil and said, write on it who or what you think is the, is the chief threat to America, you might not come within a million miles of it.

You might start with a devil, finish with a Democrat, and in between have divorce and drink and dope and I don't know what else. The greatest threat to America this morning, in my judgment, so help me, is God. You think he can't, why, why is he tied up to America? Or if I were in England, I'd say, why is God tied up to England? God was married to Israel, he divorced Israel.

He's going to remarry Israel, but for two thousand years God hasn't bothered about Israel. He didn't interfere when Germany decided to liquidate six million Jews, did he? Five times in the history of the world the Jews have had major attacks on them, have almost been annihilated, as low as less than a million at one time. They're back to about 18 million now.

God has let them be kicked around and ostracized and murdered and heaven knows what. And he's just let them suffer. We have attacked so many countries with the gospel, there are two areas where the gospel has never penetrated.

One is the Jews, there's never been a revival amongst Jews. Japan, I spoke at the Kurizawa conference there, to hundreds of missionaries. And afterwards a missionary came to me and he said, Brother Ravenel we've been here a hundred and three years and only half of one percent of this country is Christian.

Whether you say Catholics or Protestants or Jehovah's Witnesses, bunch them all together, a half of one percent of this nation is Christian. I said to them the next day, gentlemen the way you're going, and it's easy for me to say it, I said that to them. I said it's easy for me to say it, I'll be on a plane tomorrow, tomorrow night I'll be back in America.

But it's easier for me to say, but the way you're going with the message you've got, it'll take another hundred years to get the other half of that one percent. Our present evangelism is like striking a match and sitting on an iceberg, trying to melt it. It'd be pretty crazy wouldn't it? Despite the fact we've had mass crusades, and I respect Billy Graham, these are the fellows.

But America is worse off this morning than it was 25 years ago. More crime, more vileness, more wickedness, more corruption. Not because of what they've done, but in spite of what they've done.

But why don't we get a bunch of folk that really care, not preachers trying to polish up a little of their evangelistic armor, and find a new gimmick. Because this is what most goes on at many of these conferences. Did you ever try this, you should try that, you can get more money, more people.

Now evangelism, revival is the work of the Spirit in the church. Evangelism is the work of the church in the world. The promise that Jesus gave in Acts 1 was that they should receive power, the Holy Ghost coming upon them.

Not tongues Mark you, though there are gifts. That wasn't the promise. He should receive power.

And then somebody says, oh yes you should come to our church, we have miracles of all kind. You know that proves we're Pentecostal, it doesn't prove anything. Can you tell me a miracle they did after Pentecost, they didn't do before Pentecost.

They came running to Jesus before Pentecost, and they said you know even devils are subject to us. He says go into all the world, tarry, go, tarry. Contradictory, why? Because they didn't have what it took, even if they could do the miraculous.

Oh well they weren't good witnesses, you should receive power the Holy Ghost, and you should be witnesses. As soon as you get filled with the Spirit, run to everybody's door, knock and say, you know God's filled me with it. That isn't what he said.

They were good witnesses before ever they were saved, before ever they were filled with the Holy Ghost. I'll show you people who can fight you theologically about any second work of grace, or anything beyond being born of the Spirit. They're awful good witnesses, but they don't believe in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Though they claim to be well saved. The word there, ye shall be witnesses, is not the word witness in the sense of something verbal. The word actually there is ye shall be martyrs unto me.

Martyrs, sufferers, those who can bear something. You don't have what it takes. Peter only had to have a girl's finger, and she said well you belong to this man anyhow.

Your speech, he says you're a liar, I don't, I never even saw them, I don't know him. The man who ran away from a girl's finger soon puts his finger up at the leading theological men, and the fellows there that had all the distinction bishops, and he says you crucified the Lord of glory. Something happened in a man like that, that ran away from a girl and charges the whole bunch.

Ye shall be martyrs, martyrs is obviously is identified with suffering. You're going to suffer for me. Ye shall receive power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.

Did they need that power? Sure they did. How do you think fishermen would have written these epistles? If they hadn't received power. They needed power intellectually.

They needed power physically, they were going to suffer for his namesake. They needed moral power. The early church didn't get into trouble for speaking in tongues, they laughed at them for that.

They said see that bunch of guys came down there, they've been up in that room, I guess they've been drinking, that's all. Nobody's seen them for ten days anyhow, they're all drunk. I wish I could get the church drunk, for she never does anything when she's sober anyhow.

What did Paul say? Paul says be not drunk with wine, be filled with the Spirit. Why? Where's the comparison? Oh they compare all right. The first day of the war, not the first one, Second World War, I happen to be preaching in Glasgow, Scotland.

As we came home from the meeting, the pastor of this large church said I've got to call for a gas mask. Everybody must carry a gas mask. Are you coming for yours? I said no I'm not coming for mine.

He said I'm gonna get mine. I said all right. He said hey stand by this, by this lamp post.

When I come out of that lit room, now remember there were no lights in the street, no lights in the homes, no lights on automobiles. You had to put a disc over your headlight, and just you could have a thing as big as a quarter shining, just one little beam. The streetcars had no lights, everything was draped in blackness.

The Germans were going to blast us to eternity that night. So he said when I come out of that room that's lit, I won't be able to see where I'm going. He came out, I stood by that street post, and as I did, as he went in, a streetcar came up.

And a Scotsman got off, he was drunk. He wobbled across like this you know, and then he caught his foot on something. And he must have known instinctively the lamppost was there, he put his arms around the lamppost, and me as well.

And brother that he drunk something, and it wasn't coffee. Oh, did he smell. And then he felt me there, and he said, who are you? Are you a Scotsman? I said, no I'm an Englishman.

Ah, an Englishman. Can you sing? I said, no I can't sing. Ah, he says listen to me.

And he sang Maxwellton Brays of Barney, where early falls the dew. He meant the dew, but anyhow he said the dew. And then when he'd sung that, he backed off, and he said, rolled his sleeves and said, can you faint? I said, no I can't faint.

He said, who's your father? I told him who my father was. He put his hand in his pocket, and he brought out a whole stack of silver, and offered it to me. Now when a Scotsman offers you money, you know he's drunk.

He offered me all the money he had in his pocket. Now what does Paul say? He says, be not filled with wine, but be filled with the spirit. Why? Because the man who is intoxicated with God, is like the man who's naturally intoxicated.

I could have passed that man at nine o'clock in the morning, and I could have said good morning. Morning, gone on his way. But you see, he was, he was energized with something else, and he was loquacious.

He wanted to talk, he wanted my history, wanted me to talk with him. And so Paul says, be not filled with wine, but like the man who is filled with wine, if you've got something to talk about, the spirit will quicken you. And remember he doesn't boot you along, as somebody read this morning, you've got to stir yourself up, stir up the gift of God which is in you.

And the man that's filled with the spirit, wants to witness. The man that wants to fill with the spirit, wants to sing. The man that's filled with the spirit, wants to fight.

Not the other man, but the devil. The man that's filled with the spirit, is generous. Be not filled with wine where it is in excess, but be filled with a spirit.

Isn't this exactly what happened in the case of these men? The whole act of the Apostles demonstrates it. Now Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer. Here's a man crouching at the gate.

What does it say? Every word is valuable. They carried him, how often? Daily. Carried him from home to the temple, temple back home, every day, twice a day.

365 times a year. What's twice 365? 730. For 10 years 7,300 times.

For 30 years 21,900 times. Are you sure they carried him all that time? I think so, because it said he was over 40 years of age. Anyhow.

And professional beggars get a place to stay, and they stay. I could go to back to India and find men sitting in that spot I saw them years ago. I could go to London and see a man sitting exactly, he won't let that spot, no.

And nor the beggar will take it. That's his spot as long as he lives there. This man was over 40 years, maybe for 30 years he begged at the gate of the temple.

They carried him, he was carried every day. Yeah he was carried but he was never cured. People threw him a dollar, a gold piece.

Carried but not cured, helped but not healed. And he saw Peter and John coming. Oh boy, he said I'll get something here.

These are the two men had that big revival yesterday, had 5,000 converts. They'd get a big love offering I'm sure. And so he wanted to slice out of it.

He says Harry, the high priest had gone in before and most like ostentatiously tossed him a gold piece to let everybody see his arms. And the assistant pastor doesn't get as much, so he tossed him a silver piece. And he looked on Peter and John, he said I need help, I need arms.

ALMS, you know ALMS. But phonetically it's like this, arms. So the little girl was listening to a teacher read this, that he asked arms.

And she said teacher why did he ask for arms when he needed legs. Well I think he's like us, we often ask God for what we don't need, and we don't ask him for what we do need. Peter said look on us, good when you can say that isn't it.

Look on us, we too, not look on me. You see I said so very often, when we do God's work in God's way, we'll get God's power and God, we don't do it that way. The Acts of the Apostles is the, is the basic book on church government and everything else.

Why did they choose deacons? They chose them because they were full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Do you choose deacons that way? Or do you choose them because oh he's a politician and he owns two Texaco stations and a hot dog stand. Boy he'd be good on the deacon board, you know he could always pull his purse out and give you a bit.

Why do you choose deacons? Do you bring them up and say brother do you have any gifts of the Spirit? How do you qualify as a deacon? What about the preacher? Well I'm quite sure of this, that no man should be a pastor of a church. Well they say who's going to be the pastor, an archangel? No. Two men.

Why? Because Jesus sent the seventy out two by two. And you find Peter and John and Paul and Silas and Paul and Barnabas, not one man. Many times before he died of course I heard Dr. Campbell Morgan in London.

But he wouldn't pastor a church by himself. A.B. Simpson was in that fashionable big church. I preached many times in it on 8th Avenue New York.

But he wouldn't pastor it by himself. Why? You need two pastors. You need one as an evangelist to pull them in and another to feed them.

Do God's work God's way. What has the preacher to do? Bury the dead, run after them? No no no no no. Preacher shouldn't visit the sick, visit the hospital, that's not his job.

Why? Because the New Testament says so, that's why. You want to argue with it? Argue with God, don't argue with me. What does it say in the sixth chapter? The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said it's, it's not reasonable, it's not sensible, that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer and the word of God. I have very seldom found a good pastor who is a good preacher. And very seldom found a good preacher who is a good pastor.

One of the greatest preachers after Spurgeon. Indeed I think about maybe the same time as Spurgeon. Spurgeon ruled as the king in the south of England and this other man ruled Alexander McLaren.

I used to have his 32 volumes, maybe some of you have 33 with his index volume. McLaren went to that big church. They said we'll buy you a horse and carriage and give you a lovely home and here's this, it's a monstrous church.

I've been in that church, we had meetings in that church. When McLaren listened to all they offered to him, he said, he said all right I'll take the church. On one condition, what's that? Do you want my head or my feet? Here were all the gray-haired deacons around the table.

You didn't graduate as a deacon unless you had a beard and nearly bald and were getting old in those days. And they were all sitting around the table listening. McLaren said you can have my head or my feet, one or the other, not both, which do you want? They scratched their heads and they pondered and finally they said well, we'd rather have your head.

All right. You appoint women to visit the women who are sick. You appoint men to visit the men who are sick.

You appoint others to visit the hospitals. You let people bury the dead. I will give myself continually to prayer.

Forgive me for saying this and if you don't I'll still say it. I think there's an awful dearth of good pulpit preaching, not only in America but England these days. Scotland still does a good bit.

I think more there's a great dearth of pulpit praying. Spurgeon went to a great conference one day. They had a huge program.

Mr. so-and-so will lead the meeting, Mr. so-and-so will pray, Mr. so-and-so will sing, Mr. so-and-so will give the announcements, Mr. so-and-so will appeal for money, Mr. so-and-so will read the scripture, Mr. so-and-so something else. And right at the end it said, and Charles Haddon Spurgeon will preach. They gave him a copy and the little, he was a fat man you know, a little fat man sat there.

And he said, sir come here. He said, would you mind just, if I just cross my name out here as, as the preacher and let me go after the first hymn. Because if I can only preach a prayer, I'd much rather pray the power of God down than preach.

If you haven't done it, do this. I don't get any commission, I'm sure I should. But there's a series of books being reprinted in America for you preachers.

And if you're not a preacher they're worth buying anyhow. And now I think they're called, Preaching Through the Bible. The series used to be called, The People's Bible.

It's a series of sermons, they're not complete through the Bible, but they are complete in one sense. They're from Genesis to, as the man said, from generations to revelations. They're for revolutions he said, but they're from Genesis to revelation.

And they were preached by Dr. J.H. Parker in London. And if you don't read a sermon, you don't read a sermon in the whole set, read all the prayers that were taken verbatim, they'd no tape recorders. Somebody took his prayers down.

And brother when you've read those, there's more in his prayers than you get in most sermons these days. Many people said, the lady said the other day, I'm going to London, who would I go hear preach? I said, I don't know. If you've been gone five years ago, I'd have said, go hear my friend Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones in Westminster.

And everybody that went, even preachers, when I've seen them, I say, well what do you think of Dr. Martin Lloyd? Oh he's a fabulous preacher. But do you not impress me most? I don't say no, I don't know, because I do. I say what? His pulpit prayer.

They sang a hymn, he prayed, thank you for this day, and the privilege of being in thy house, and so forth, amen. And then they have a hymn, then he reads the scripture, and he says, let us pray. And you know I timed him, he prayed 15 minutes, he prayed 20 minutes.

Not preached, he prayed. Somebody said one day to my good friend Dr. Paul Rees, how long does it take you to prepare a sermon, without batting an eye, he said 15 hours. Five hours a day for three days.

Two sermons a week to prepare, then you've got five hours of solid study each day, for your morning sermon and your night sermon. But what about your prayer? I heard you Sunday morning, you prayed such a marvelous prayer, I didn't care whether you preached at all. Do you prepare your praying? And he said, yes I do.

How long does it take you? Well he said, it takes me about two hours to prepare an eight or a ten minute prayer. Why shouldn't a man prepare? Why can't God tell that man the needs of the church before he goes? And instead of the usual thing. I get so bored usually, when I go.

Somebody says, Brother Smith will you pray? And he says, Lord thank you again, it's Sunday. Bless us today and bless the choir and the message and thank you, Amen. No wonder the kids settle down here.

Oh boy, old John's gonna pray again. Get it over. Read the prayers of Parker.

He gets wings, he gets into the heavenly places. I'm sure that's what they did here in the early church. This is how they prayed here.

Peter and John went at the hour of prayer. I'd like to have heard Peter and John praying in the Holy Ghost. That's why they could step right out, or even into the arena.

Because they did not merely pray, but they lived in the attitude of prayer. And immediately they were challenged with this man who'd been there years, and professional religion and orthodoxy and theology could do nothing for him. And Peter says, look on us.

You see he'd been in the upper room and he'd been drained of all the old Peter. In the upper room they weren't arguing for ten days. Thomas there's no blessing coming because you're still doubting.

Peter you know you're the backslider. And as for you, oh no they were not accusing each other. They were there with a common need.

They were there for ten days, getting drained of everything that they had. Much easier to say fill me isn't it, than kill me. Much easier to want to be filled, and want to be emptied.

But you see how so many natural gifts, natural gifts. You think God goes looking around saying man if I could get that man from Cape Kennedy, he's such a genius. What an IQ he's got.

Oh if only I could get hold of it. God doesn't go to looking around for intellects. He doesn't despise them, because he gave us a brain and we should use it.

But you see there is a wisdom which is from above, and there's a wisdom which is from beneath. You can learn the Bible by education. You can learn it by revelation.

I've heard little coal miners on the hills of Wales expound the Word of God, until I felt I don't care if I never hear Campbell Morgan or anybody else again. And the man couldn't tell you a Greek root from a rhubarb root. But he knew God.

You know there's one thing we can't stand these days. You see we're gonna get a new pastor. Of course we, at least you must have a, well we couldn't get a man just with a BA.

At least he'd have to have a BD, PhD, an earned PhD, particularly from Edinburgh. He'd really adorn the pulpit. I get sick when I hear that.

I want to say to men, do you think God is looking for sponsors? What did he do when this men, these men turned the church upside down, healed the man of his miracles, and made everybody staggered. Do you know what they did? They rubbed their noses in the dust. At least they thought they did.

They said listen don't be too disturbed about these, these are unlearned and ignorant men. Oh boy that's hard to take isn't it. Do you know how unlearned they were? Well one of them a fellow was called Peter.

He wrote two fabulous epistles that have been bestsellers for thousands of, for 2,000 years. That's ignorance. And the other ignoramus gave us the most beautiful thing in English prose.

He wrote the gospel as we call it, the gospel recorded by John. And then he wrote the first epistle of John, the second epistle of John, the third epistle of John. That's four bestsellers.

And then to prove he was ignorant, he wrote the book of the Revelation that baffles all the wise men. How do you like that for ignorance? There are times when you've got to lay, lay your brilliance on one side and say Lord I'm just beat here you, you give me some revelation. Because revelation is greater than education.

Now revelation on education may be something else too. I've heard people say oh we've too much smartness and I don't go for that scholarship and stuff. And you know what they do? As soon as they go to their study they reach down a book like, like Alexander McLaren was a scholar.

Clark's commentary on the Bible, he was a profound scholar. They pick up Lange or somebody, a man well versed in Hebrew. And they take all the brilliant scholarship of the centuries.

Or they despise it here, but they're very glad to get to it when they need some crutches to walk on you know. No there's not that you despise it totally. It's when you try and put it in the place of the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

And as I said the other night there are two things that are elusive in this world. Number one, personal anointing by the Holy Ghost. And number two, revival.

And no money will get them and no organization will get them. And no theological school have a monopoly on them. You can't get anointed with the Holy Ghost because you go to the best of the worst school in America.

You get anointed with the Holy Ghost when you get broken and contrite and empty. And to the place where you don't care a hill of beans whether you're somebody or nobody, you get something or nothing. And you get to the place where you say as Charles Wesley said, thou O Christ art all I want.

Here is a man he's all twisted and distorted at the beautiful gate of the temple. What are you going to do? The high priest says there you are friend, there's a gift. The other priest says there you are, that may help you a little while.

And here is this man he's still here at the gate of the temple all distorted and crippled. What are you going to do? Where did he find his answer? He find, found his answer in two simple men, Peter and John. They were cleansed and they were consecrated and they were compassionate and they were confident Christians.

Stop your recorder and turn the cassette over to side two for the rest of the message. That's where he found his answer. Not in high saluting theology, not in men that could juggle Greek and Hebrew.

They found a man who, men who'd been in touch with God and with one hand on God and the other on the crippled man. They touched him and immediately his ankle bones received strength and it says he began to leap and to stand up and he shouted and he praised God. What a difference.

I say again as far as I'm concerned I'm sick and I mean that. When I see this pretty little thing we try to call the Church of Jesus Christ today and the Church as it was in the New Testament. I've said it let me say it again before I finish.

We are about the most impotent rebellious children Almighty God ever had to raise. I don't care whether you're Pentecostal or Presbyterian what we are. We pay lip service to the Holy Spirit yes we believe he is a person not an influence.

He is a person he has intelligence he speaks he guides so forth you try and prove the attributes. Like human attributes he has them. If he's such a wonderful person and he certainly is.

How in the world did we ever get to the place where we try to tell the Holy Ghost to come 11 o'clock Sunday morning and quit at 12. Come back at 7 Sunday night finish at 8 and come back Wednesday night and leave at 9. Supposing you got home and you found your house on fire. You run to a neighbor and say to the fire department hey come quick my house is on fire I live at 11 21 21st Street please get here quick.

The fellow says hold it a minute. You had your fire a day too early this fire department only opens Sunday morning 11 to 12 and Sunday night 7 to 8 and Wednesday night 7 to 8. What would you do if you had an accident in the home and you call the the hospital and they said well I'm sorry but the hospitals only open Sunday morning 11 to 12 and 7 to 8 and Wednesday night. You say that's ridiculous.

Is it any more ridiculous than what the church does. You know what revival does I'll tell you one thing it does it shatters all our concepts of what religion to Christian religion really is. I talked many hours many times with the man who had revival in the Hebrides, Duncan Campbell.

A distinct Scot, a man with profound theology. But God got hold of him one day. He was sitting in a meeting in Ireland and he heard the Lord say go to the Hebrides, go to the Hebrides.

It's 8 o'clock well yeah I better go in the morning and try and get, go now. He said to the chairman I'm going. He said we'll wait till he come back.

I'm not coming back. Well where are you going? I'm going to Scotland. When? Right now.

You've 1,200 people waiting for an exposition of the Word of God. What do you mean you're going? I don't know the Lord just told me to go. He'd received a letter from a little blind lady 82 years of age and a sister of 84.

No the old one was 84 was blind 82 the other one. And she said God has impressed me to ask you to come to the Hebrides. And he wrote back dear lady my calendar is filled for the next three years I maybe I could come about four years from now.

When the letter came the younger lady read it to her sister and the blind lady said praise the Lord. She said no I said he's not coming. She said yes praise the Lord.

She said I said he's not coming. The little blind lady said that's what he said. He'll be here all right.

And in the middle of a conference just before, as they were singing and somebody the Lord says get up and go. You've got to know God's voice to obey like that. He got up he went to the boat, got off the boat, just crossed the dock.

Asked the man can I get a flight out to to the Hebrides. That's that bunch of islands off the west coast of Scotland. The man said yes we've got one plane, one seat.

He took it. He got to an island the only way to the other island is get a man to row you over in a boat. And they went over and as he went over they pulled up on the sand.

And he said to the boy that took him over, who's the minister of that church on the hill. He said they don't have one. Oh he said that man over in the field there, he is a he's a chief elder in the church.

Here's a man that's come from Ireland on a wild goose chase as other people would think. He goes to the elder and the elder said hello. He says hello.

It's a lovely day. He said yes a lovely day. Yeah yeah it's a great day.

It's gonna be a great a night. Why? Oh oh why? Well he said I got on my bicycle this morning just after sunrise. And I went to all the farms round about.

And I told them to come to the Kirk as they call the meeting. Come to the Kirk tonight and have a great revival meeting. Oh who's going to preach? Oh he said a fella called Duncan Campbell's coming.

He said here? Yeah yeah. How do you know? He said mister you see my barn there. I spent all day the day before yesterday down in the straw praying.

I told God I don't care where Duncan Campbell is. You can tell him to come and he's gonna come. We're gonna have a meeting Wednesday night.

I wasn't too sure about the end of the day. So I stayed late into the night up to my neck in straw nearly. So nobody'd hear me and nobody'd find me.

And he said I just got it out with God. You've got to bring that man tomorrow night to preach in this island. And he said we'll have a great meeting.

Do you believe Duncan Campbell? Oh he'll come all right. No worry about that. By the way what's your name? Duncan Campbell.

The man wasn't a bit surprised. Well he says we'll have a great meeting. You know we're so void of the supernatural we've got to write letters and send long-distance forms.

And do this and do that and do the other. And get somebody booked up. Oh boy you've got to get him.

You know how to become rich and popular in evangelism? Play hard to get. Don't be stupid like me and stay to church from Sunday to Sunday. Go Sunday to Wednesday night and start another meeting Thursday night till Sunday.

You get two wages. If you stay a week you only get the same money. But if you go to two different churches you double your income you see.

Didn't the Lord say you should be rich after the Holy Ghost is come upon you? No that must be in the Amplified. I can't see it here. Or at least it's been Amplified.

You know that man went to that church in that community. And one night after he preached the heaven was like brass. Nothing happened.

So he said to a boy John Smith 16. He said John God isn't here tonight. The house is filled but God seems a million miles away.

Pray. The boy stood up and he said first of all let's meet God's conditions. And they read Psalm 24 who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord and so forth.

And he prayed. A 16 year old boy prayed about 45 minutes. And when he finished it was just as though you pulled a switch and the heavens opened and God came down.

On the church mm-hmm. And on the tavern down the street and on the dance hall down there. God descended on that community.

Tozer was right in many things and he was right when he said a revival changes the moral climate of a community. I don't care how many people come forward. If you've 3,000 come forward.

And the moral atmosphere isn't changed. You didn't have revival. You had a bit of a move.

You had some blessing but you didn't have revival. Prayer is the greatest power in the world. We've almost made money that haven't we? If we could get enough money to get on another radio station or get somebody to come.

Of course I mean if he came he'd have to give at least, well lots of evangelists want a thousand for a weekend now. Two or three thousand for a week. I sometimes wonder if God will have to break the economy of America to make us find out who's the sheep and who's the goats.

You think these fellows will jump on a plane to go to Kansas City and preach the heart out for two hours if they get nothing but the plane fare. Don't get a side check for 500. It'll be a hard way but it'll be worth it.

We're better to go to heaven with a Holy Ghost revival and belts you've got to pull in and have your trousers pulled in by six or eight inches and go to hell fat anyhow. And it all depends on the church. All right quickly now they found their answer in this man.

Not in the hierarchy, not in the big shots, Peter and John. Peter said look on us. As I say they found their answer in the, in these men.

Two penniless preachers. We, I'm sorry we don't have anything. You've got more than we have.

We're penniless preachers. We don't have any pennies but we have power. Usually when the church is rich she's poor.

Do you remember the church in Revelation that said I'm rich and increased in goods I've need of nothing. And God said of that same church thou art naked, wretched, blind, poor and miserable. Do you remember another church a bit later on where the church says I well we're very poor.

He says I know thy poverty but thou art rich. Which is the best. It's an amazing thing there's no revival in America this morning and you know that.

There's none in England. Do you know where there's revival? In the poorest countries in the world. Do you know Ethiopia? Is it Isaiah that says Ethiopia will soon stretch her hands out to God.

That she's having a re-issue of the Acts of the Apostles. That they have meetings and without healing lines God descends. And a fellow like this dear fellow would jump out of his chair and blind people say oh I can see.

Somebody says oh my ears my ears I can hear. Not only that but these heathen people in Ethiopia. In the Coptic Church and other brands of religion they have a been genuinely born again of the Spirit of God.

They have a Holy Ghost New Testament revival in Ethiopia. About eight years ago remember when the Mau Mau's were cutting the heads off girls and young missionaries. They have the most amazing revival in that country right now.

My friend Norman Grubb. I've known Norman over 40 years. For me one of the most outstanding men in the world.

A man who still gets an inheritance every year from the family estate and he takes the check and endorses it and gives it to missions and he lives by faith and has done that for 40 years. Norman says I'm getting letters now from Africa. And all I can say when I've read them is the word of the psalmist I'm like one that dreams.

Oh nobody took a tent there. There's no big shot saying you know I'm the world's greatest healer. I have the world's greatest fireproof tent.

No sirree. Where are they having a revival for 20 years? I've urged people to pray for a Mohammedan country. Because Christianity has never broken Mohammedanism open until the last five or six years.

And now in Indonesia. You can quarrel with the book like a mighty wind. You can say it's exaggerated.

What isn't exaggerated in America anyhow. But the story maybe is exaggerated. But to me the miracle is not that men walk through water 30 feet deep.

Or that 60 times they laid their hands on water because they had no money and the water became wine so they could have communion. Or that at least 10 people have been raised from the dead. And a cool man like what's his name Taylor, head of National Association of Evangelicals.

Says that he found this was true when he was there. That to me is not the great sign. The greatest signs are not miracles.

I've been in meetings where nearly every miracle has been done except raising the dead. Blind people get their eyes. Crippled people jump out of chairs.

I've seen that happen. The greatest miracle in that Mohammedan country was it split Mohammedanism wide open. And the church has gained more in the last five years than in the previous 50 years.

And again they were unlearned and ignorant men. They didn't even have a Bible. They had to sit in in chairs and and they were taught scriptures.

Now you caught this scripture and they memorized that scripture. They were too poor to have Bibles. But they had the anointing of the one who wrote the word of God and he made it live and they went out and demonstrated that living Word of God.

You see most of our time on a Sunday you have a fellow in the pulpit and what did he do? He's defending a dead man. Jesus didn't say go out and defend me. He says going to work all the world and preach the gospel, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead.

That's the gospel. I get sick of hearing men say thank God we believe the Bible from cover to cover. And they spend the next 20 minutes saying why gifts aren't for today and decrying the Holy Spirit of God.

Peter Lord said in one conference we were in. How many of you believe everything you read in the newspaper? Raise your hand. Nobody raised their hand.

How many of you believe everything you see on TV, the news? Raise your hand. Nobody raised their hand. How many of you believe your Bible from cover to cover? They all raise their hand.

Well they said you're funny people. You spend more time looking at news you don't believe and reading a newspaper you don't believe, than reading the book you do believe. That's pretty clumsy logic maybe.

But it's pretty hard logic too isn't it? As I said this week teaching trying to teach Hebrews. It says in the second chapter of Hebrews there of course you say verse three. Our preacher preached on how shall we escape.

That's not talking to sinners, it's talking to believers. There isn't a word in Hebrew. There isn't an epistle in the New Testament written to sinners.

You say we've got a heathen world, we've got communism, this isn't us. Those aren't God's problem you know. God's problem in his world this morning, is his church.

God's problem in the Old Testament wasn't the Amalekites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, it was Israel. It's always trying to get her back to the place, where she could have his blessing. God's problem is his church today.

We're as near bankruptcy as we could ever be. Look at this New Testament church, it floods, it vibrates. What's the difference between that church and this? Here it is this fantastic record, every time you open the pages you're stirred.

A notable miracle was done. People went to church and what did it say? It says they went to church and saw what God was doing, and they were all amazed. Our people are not all amazed, they're all amused.

You've got to tickle their ears, tell them some funny stories, say some silly things. As Tozer said, you don't have to be a comedian now, you just go to church, sit round tables, say some silly stories. It's the same thing with a little bit of salt and pepper of sanctity on it.

All due respect to this house, here you are, you've got a sports arena in the house of God. You wouldn't have found this in Spurgeon's church. Spurgeon wouldn't have a choir, that's the war department of the church.

He wouldn't have a choir, he wouldn't have solos, wouldn't have music. But I met an old lady 95, and I sat in this palatial home and she sat like Whistler's mother on a chair with a lace collar and a footstool and servants. And she said Mr. Raven, I want to tell you about the days I used to hear this fantastic man Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

Oh brother they kicked him around. He never had a healing line, but you know what they said, more people were healed through the prayers of Charles Haddon Spurgeon than all the hospitals in London. You see we get things backwards way.

You go to a meeting and they preach the Bible for about 15 minutes and have two hours healing line. They never had that in the New Testament. Faith cometh by what? Hearing.

This is what I say again, we, we've turned the thing upside down. We go to church Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, the preacher gets up maybe at 20 to 12 and he gets going. He says well I, of course I don't have time to deal with this subject.

Well what did I go for? I didn't go to hear Mr. Jones gargle to the organ, sing I mean. I didn't go to hear the choir. Faith cometh by hearing, not hearing the choir, not hearing the soloist, they may make a contribution.

But this is what Satan fears. He fears the Word of God, lest you and I get that word and it ignites us. What's it say in Hebrews chapter 2? Talks about the gospel which first was preached by Jesus Christ.

And then it was preached by them that heard him, with signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. And I don't care what church it is. Don't care what brand it bears if it's true Christian.

If it does not have signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, it is not a New Testament Church. It may follow the pattern of headquarters. You may be blessed if you don't cross the line into the

miraculous and the supernatural.

And say somebody in our prayer meeting the other night, God came on them and they prophesied. Well of course we'll have to write to headquarters and see if this is all right. Maybe those boys at headquarters don't know the first thing about prophecy.

The only prophet they ever heard of was Gene Dixon. When are we going to get back to apostolic Christianity? I'm not saying you can turn it as quick. No sirree, we're gonna have to.

We've all been brainwashed, I don't care who we are. We've all been indoctrinated. We've all heard so much slant of truth this way, slant that.

But listen when you get to heaven my brother, when I get to heaven. You're not going to be judged by Dallas Theological Seminary, or some books Ravenhill wrote, or something that Spurgeon wrote. You and I are gonna have to stand, as I tried to say the other night.

You're gonna stand by yourself on a dais before one whose eyes is a flame of fire. And you've got a thousand billion people looking on all the saints of all the ages. Wesley, Finney, Booth, all the men.

The great prophets, Zechariah and Ezekiel, Moses, all looking on to you. That may feel so very big when you go to your fine church tomorrow morning. I'll tell you as Tozer said, not many of us are going to stand erect at the judgment seat and look into those eyes like a flame of fire.

Did you ever go on a platform like this one here? It's a lovely church, I really enjoyed preaching in it, there's a freedom. But you know I've been to some churches where they dim all the lights and they just put two fierce lights. And I don't like that, don't like to be in the spotlight like that.

And you know everybody looks on you. You say boy I wouldn't stand up there for a thousand dollars, my knees would knock out. I don't think I could get a word out.

You know when we get to the judgment seat, there are not going to be two big spotlights on us. There are going to be two eyes like a flame of fire that will read us like an x-ray reads every rib and everything in your body. And we're going to have a given account to God as to why we did not come up to the stature of men in the world of God.

What's the difference between their church and ours? Theirs is a supernatural church, ours is a superficial church. What did they treat the men for? When they sell the boldness of Peter and John. The church now isn't known for boldness, it's known for coldness.

What was the early church? It was apostolic. What is the church today? Or shall we say, yes it was apostolic. What is the church today? Almost apostate, speaking generally.

What was the church then? It was prophetic. What is the church today? Pathetic. What were they known for? An expanding church.

What are we known for generally? An expiring church. We've less Christians in the country at this given point, than we had 25 years ago, pro rata. These are the differences.

They were known for their faith, they were known for our futility. What was the secret? Let's wind it up. They were what? They were all filled.

You see the trouble is that we come into a little new blessing. We haven't had this blessing, and suddenly we come into a blessing. And oh it's so lovely the Lord's come into my life.

And you know what we do? We settle on a plateau. That's where we settle. It's so marvellous after what I've had, wait a minute brother.

It was so wonderful for Israel to get out of the place where every morning their backs were lashed with a whip. And they have to make clay and make so many things. But you know once they got away from Egypt, a type of the world, and Pharaoh, a type of the devil, what did they do? They settled in Kadesh Barnea.

They didn't go to the promised land. And then when they got there, some of them wanted to sit just round the edge and not explore the territory. Don't you think that's our situation? You say well if you're filled with the Spirit, what is there beyond that? Everything.

I thought that was the end. It is, the beginning end. You say well you're filled, if you're filled, if you're filled, can you fill what's full? Sure you can.

Without emptying it? Yeah. I could bring you a glass of water, fill it to the brim. And say to you, I'm going to fill that glass of water without emptying it.

I'm going to fill it with something else. You say you can't do it. Oh yes I can very easily.

If I had my other fountain pen, I'd do it. I'd bring a glass of water and I'd press my fountain pen and that's pure water, it's filled right to the top. And I press like that and one drop of ink will go and fill that.

With what? Color. Full of water, but I can fill what's full because I'll fill it with color. Or take this building.

You might say somebody came in this building a few hours ago and when they came in it was empty. No it wasn't, if it was they'd drop dead. It was full of air, full of air.

And then he put on the switch. It was already full of air, he put on the switch, he filled it with light. And then maybe he could turn up the heat and the building that's full of air and full of light, he can fill it with heat.

And then you can fill it with people. And then they start singing, you can fill it with praise. And some lady might come in with perfume and say, boy that's good, that's lovely.

Now the building was full, was full of air, filled with people, filled with light, filled with sound, filled with heat, filled with perfume. The trouble is we settle to how they fill with a little bit of blessing. Go on possess the land.

We grab at Peter don't we, and we say well, well Peter was a wonderful man. Oh man, God filled him with the Holy Spirit. Right.

Listen do you know the classical example of a spirit filled man is to me in the New Testament. Not Peter, not even Paul in one sense. A little fellow, maybe 18 years of age, Stephen.

You know what it says? It says that, look out among you seven men of honest report. These are what deacons are to be, full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. We're going to give ourselves continually to prayer and the Word of God.

And it pleased the multitude. And they found Stephen a man full of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost. And Stephen full of the Holy Ghost, and full of power, and full of wonders, and full of miracles.

It's the same men. What does Paul say to a church already filled with the Spirit, that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will. Or that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

It says of the Christians in Acts 3, that when they saw the miracles, they were filled with wonder. And after they were filled with wonder, they were filled with joy. Now I can't prove this, you can't disprove it.

But I can't prove that Ananias and Sapphira were in the upper room. You can't disprove that they were. But if they were, at one point they were filled with the Spirit of God.

And in chapter 5, the man of God says, while Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. You know when you see one of those rockets go blasting up there, you say that must be the most powerful, terrible weapon the world's ever had. No, no, no, no, no.

The most terrible weapon is the guy inside of your suit. The most terrible weapon is a man filled with a devil like Hitler. Everybody sneered at Hitler.

He sat in the bloody, muddy trenches after World War One. And said that he would one day dominate the world. And they said, all he's got is Charlie Chaplin's moustache on his lip.

And he's only one stripe on his arm anyhow. He can't even make it here. What's he think? But boy, you remember when he stood there and put his fist up and said, the Third Reich will live a thousand years.

When he had the greatest military machine in the world's history. He had more airplanes, he had more tanks, he had more doodle beds. He had the greatest arsenal in history and he came within an ace of conquering the world.

Why? Why? Simple answer, he dedicated himself to it. One period he never bothered with women, he didn't bother with sport. When other men went to bed, he got a spiritist medium to sit up with him.

He studied astrology. He studied Napoleon, the greatest military strategist in history maybe. He gave himself to it.

What's the reason that Paul conquered in the way he did? Because he gave himself to it. This one thing I do. If Jesus Christ can work this miracle in my life.

If he can possess me, spirit, soul and body. If I can be the temple of the Holy Ghost. That God doesn't dwell in a, they're going to put a church up there now in Fort Lauderdale.

They've already got the plan, six million dollars. The steeple is going to cost one million dollars. You think Almighty God's interested in a stack of stone? I've been in jungles, I've been in leper colonies.

When people have no fingers and a man has one leg. And a man with one arm is helping a man with one leg. And somebody's leading a blind person.

I sat in with that bunch of people that stunk literally. Away up in the wilds of a forest in Thailand in a leper colony. And felt as conscious of God's presence as I've done in some of the greatest churches I've preached in the world.

And I've preached in some of the world's outstanding churches. But I felt God as near and as powerful in a leper colony. Where some of their lips couldn't even articulate.

Where some of them only had a thread holding an eyeball in and you could see their throat. All the face was eaten away and you could see the string of their tongues. Where they tried to take bleeding hands that had no medication.

And the ulcers were there and the pus. And they were clapping them like they to sing Jesus loves me, this I know. And what a friend we have in Jesus.

And when I think the way you have almost to lasso some strongmen to get them to a prayer meeting. I wonder if they know the ABC about the gospel. The devil gentlemen doesn't want us to rediscover the power of the Holy Church.

If we do we'll blast his kingdom. Let the Holy Ghost come on any church. I do not care where that church is.

And let the deacons be filled with the Holy Ghost. And let them say this one thing we do. We're not trying to outrival any other church.

But we want God to be glorified. We want to see apostolic power, apostolic purity, apostolic piety. On an apostolic pattern.

Let the church get as desperate as that. Where its deacons are not concerned just to make money or become clever or famous or run here or run there. I believe God is going to find a church in America somewhere where he's going to come with a power of the Holy Ghost.

And instead of the preacher going from here to hold seminaries over there and going over there. People will come from the north, the south, the east and the west. I don't know how you pray.

How can I? I've never lived in your personality. I'll tell you how I pray. I pray Lord will you please find a church in America.

It may not exist this morning, I don't know. It doesn't have to happen. If I build a church, you know what I'd do? I'd build it like a barn.

So it hasn't got anything beautiful or attractive about it. I'm not condemning your church. I think it's beautiful, I like it.

But I'm just saying, and I build the pews this way and this and that. And the elders would sit with a preacher. And the church would, would function like the church.

Now I don't know who you are. You could be profound scholars of Hebrew or Greek. Can you tell me a reason why we should go to church twice on a Sunday? There's nothing in the New Testament about it.

You can't prove to me people went to church to get saved. They didn't. They went to church because they were saved.

They were saved through the aggressive witness of men who were so transformed they saved you. And somebody says, what happened to you? You were a sex brother, our dear brother, openly confessed that

dominated by sex. Another man drinkers somewhere else.

They say, what happened? You say, this is what happened. And before long the guy says, look this is robbing my life too. Will you take me, I'd like to come.

No man dare go to church. You can join any church now. Let me say the last thing.

I preached to a bunch of Pentecostal pastors a while ago. Very fine men too. Some wonderful men.

I said to them, are you all Pentecostal? Amen. Do you have a Pentecostal? Amen. Just let me tell you what a Pentecostal church is.

They went to church every day. They broke bread every day. They prayed every day.

They had souls added to the Lord every day. How many of you have a Pentecostal church? Raise your hand. Do you know how many hands were raised? None.

Why did they go to church? Because they saw the transforming power of Christ in men that belong in the church. Go to church twice on Sunday. Why? Well can you prove from, I mean what can you prove from the New Testament? Did they go to church or didn't they go to church for out for twice on, no they didn't go to church twice on Sunday.

Why? Well the fifth chapter and I run right up here. The Acts of the Apostles, what is it? It's the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. And the man went to church and he cheated on God.

And the preacher says just a minute before we sing the next stanza. Brother Ananias did you do so and so? Yeah I did that praise God. Listen you didn't lie to me you just tried to pull a fast one.

You lied to God and he fell dead. His wife went to church. How long after? Well read the story, three hours after.

Well if you went to our church three hours after the service from 11 to 12 the pastor would be starting a new crusade in New York. He'd have caught a jet and gone away. She went to church three hours after the meeting was still on.

She slipped in. Hello just a minute sister Sapphira did you do so and so? Yeah my husband and I did that pastor. You agreed with your husband to lie to me and try and cheat.

Now Peter didn't kill the first one, he killed the second. Carry her out. Do you think it gets a bit stale some Sunday morning say would you kindly stand and sing hymn number 21 holy, holy, holy.

Start the meeting that way kill a couple of your friends in the church. It changes the atmosphere believe me. Only don't raise your hand and say you liars I'm going to kill you all.

Of course you could have no congregation left. You better just say Ananias and Sapphira you lied. Do you think people are going to live in a state of immorality, cheating in the shop, running around with a woman, fella goes away for a few days and he calls a tall girl in or something.

Or he says boy I was just looking there, there's nobody around and nobody knows me in Chicago. Give me a Chicago trip and a copy of playboy. Do you think men and women would cheat when they knew the pastor stood in the power of the Spirit and he might expose and say look my brother you better get right

down here make an open confession I'll pronounce death on you.

That's as much as being filled with a holy ghost. That's as much as raising the man who was crippled. The holy, the church was holy, it was pure, it was strong.

And you know what I'm right through. We're going to have a church like that right before Jesus comes. Yes sir, corruption is going to increase, wickedness is going to increase, but God's going to say look I'm not going to be left at the end of the line.

He said in Joel 2, I'll pour out my spirit and all flesh your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men see visions, your old men dream dreams. And on my servants and handmaid, not my preachers and bishops will they notice. It's going to be a young people's revival, your sons and your daughters.

It's going to be a working-class revival on my servants and handmaid. Do you know why? Because that's how the church began. Not by bishops and brilliant men, unlearned, ignorant, poor men.

The Holy Ghost came upon them. And they went out and they turned the world upside down. They didn't like to hear the preachers were coming.

They said hey these fellows are going to wreck the whole system. All that we might get back from the superficial, to the supernatural. I was reading, is it in the sixth chapter a bit further, you know where they put the men in prison? And they said you shut your mouth and you don't preach anymore like this.

And they shut them up in the third chapter. And then was it the sixth chapter? And they locked them up. They said we don't like this.

And somebody went to the high priest and he said well, thank God we got rid of those fanatics. What fanatics? Those men we locked in jail last night. Well sir I'm sorry to tell you they're down in the market.

They've got thousands of people, they're in jail, we locked them up. Come here, can't you see the soldiers guarding them? Isn't that stupid? You think God doesn't pull tricks? They've been guarding an empty jail all night. The men of God weren't there.

The Lord opened the door and let them out. I say again when the church isn't supernatural, it's superficial. I don't mind standing at the end of the line and watching some of these young men, if they'll be humble and broken enough and don't get itching after money.

And get ruined with women, or tagging on to somebody else. Since 1949 I've traveled the world. And I never had a paycheck except for two years when, when a millionaire financed me.

And I guess I did less in that time. He dropped me after two years, that's all right. Didn't make me rich.

So I know what it is to walk with God to some degree. Trust him for every penny of the journey. I put my boys through school, college, university.

One's in South America right now, the other's on the Ivory Coast, the white man's grave, and the other one's down there. Just come out of Papua, New Guinea and gone to New Zealand. God embarrasses us sometimes.

He puts our noses in the dust and yet he brings us right through. Silver and gold I have none. You know there's a great joy in having nothing.

You know what it is? You can't lose anything. If you've no pride, nobody'll ever hurt it. Great joy in having nothing.

You can't lose it. Just like being dead, nobody can kill you. If you're already dead now, if you died in Jesus Christ, and you're alive, nobody, nobody can kill you, you're dead.

There's a great peril in having nothing. A man came at midnight and I had nothing to set before him. And it's the midnight hour in human history.

And comparatively speaking, the Church has nothing. What we need, is some time of searching God's Word together, as deacons and elders and Sunday school teachers and workers. And finding out where we got off the track.

Because Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Thank you.

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